UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration
State College, New Mexico

NEW MEXICO

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No. 284

WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

NEEDS ESTIMATES AND PROGRAM CONFERENCE CALLED - New Mexico will be represented at a 2-day conference on conservation needs and the Agricultural Conservation Program to be held at Dallas, Texas, March 16-17.

Mr. C. V. Hemphill, State PMA Chairman, says that the study of conservation needs is of increasing importance. Not only does it affect the allocation of funds between States, but, of greater importance, the needs estimates serve as a guide in program planning and administration.

He explained that for the past 3 years county and community agricultural conservation committees have been conducting needs surveys to determine how much conservation is needed — for example, how many farms need terraces and how many and the size of terraces that are needed on each farm.

States also will be asked to have their recommendations on the 1949 Agricultural Conservation Program in Washington by May 1. At the conference State representatives will have a chance to discuss proposed changes in the program.

Some of the questions to be discussed at the regional conference are: What changes in the program will be needed to get all the farmers who need conservation work to carry out conservation practices on their farms? What assurance can be had that assistance will be given only for conservation that would not be done without program aid? How can an effective crop-rotation system be established on every farm?

Also to be considered at the meeting are means for making more effective the findings of the conservation needs surveys, local practices, the use of State technical committee, and long-time program planning.

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WORLD FOOD OUTLOOK IMPROVED BUT STILL BELOW PREWAR - World food prospects are improving but there is still a long time to go until the harvests are in, current reports received by the New Mexico Production and Marketing Administration office indicate.

Some of the high points of recent world crop reports are: Australia's 1947 wheat production, according to the mid-December official estimate, now stands at 226 million bushels, the largest crop on record for Australia. It is 110 million bushels larger than the crop of 1946.

No official crop estimates have been released by the Argentine government, but unofficial estimates range upward from 225 million bushels. Corn crop prospects there also are reported to be excellent.

World rice production has risen to about 96 percent of prewar production. Supplies are about 2 million tons larger than last year.

However, the world's breadbasket will not be full this year. More than that, there will be a much smaller reserve of grains in the world's pantries.

The Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations says in its latest report: "Further increases in production of cereals, rice, fats and oils, sugar and feeds are likely if favorable weather conditions continue and acreage intentions for 1948 are carried out. However, supplies of those products on a per capita basis, would still be below prewar and would permit only a moderate relaxation of the present stringent levels of consumption in the deficit producing countries."

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LIVESTOCK ON FARMS CONTINUE DECLINE IN NUMBERS - Livestock on farms and ranches declined during 1947 to the lowest numbers since 1939. Numbers have dropped 4 years in succession since reaching the all-time peak on January 1, 1944.

Behind the decline are high prices for meat animals and for feed, plus reduced feed supplies in the last half of the year. These conditions encouraged marketing and closer culling of flocks and breeding herds, thus resulting in a heavy rate of slaughter in relation to inventory numbers.

Decreased cattle numbers resulted from a record slaughter of cattle and calves and reduced imports of cattle from Mexico. Liquidation of sheep numbers continued during 1947, but the rate of decline was more moderate than in any year since 1942;

the January 1 number of stock sheep for 1948 being the smallest since records began in 1867. Hog numbers were the lowest since 1941. Numbers of horses and mules declined sharply, continuing the downward trend which began in 1915 for horses and in 1925 for mules. Chickens on farms numbered the fewest since 1941, and the turkey inventory showed the smallest number of record beginning in 1929.

Notwithstanding the smaller numbers of every kind of livestock and poultry, the farm value of the January 1, 1948 inventory hit a record high of 13,451 million dollars, 12 percent above last year and 90 percent above the 1937-46 average. Only for horses and mules were values per head lower than last year.

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CANADIAN FARMERS SEE CONSERVATION NEEDS - "Neglected and wasted land dies and eventually the people die with it."

With these emphatic and foreboding words an Ontario, Canada, farmer and milk producer in a recent statement brought home to Canadian farmers their responsibility to maintain the soil.

He explained "a hundred years ago my grandfather cut down the forest in Lambton County — a forest that it had taken hundreds of years to grow. And in that hundred years since my grandfather cut down the forest we've done a good job of using up and eroding out the humus that it took nature thousands of years to put into the soil."

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RAIN AT THE WINDOW - Rain beating at the window, wind moaning in the eaves, and a moonless night are the setting for many a story of fiction tragedy. Except for the moonless night, they also are the setting for a story of real tragedy — a story which may be even more tragic depending on what we do or don't do in the future.

As explained by Santiago Marquez, member of the New Mexico PMA Committee, the rain at the window and the wind in the eaves tell two powerful stories. One is of green pastures, abundant harvests, healthy people and happy homes. The other is of dust storms, muddy water, gullied farms, wasted land, poverty and desolation.

And the kind of a story depends on us farmers, the PMA member says. The wind can mean moisture-laden clouds moving in from the ocean carrying rain for growing crops. Or the wind can mean clouds of dust--precious topsoil--blowing away. The rain can mean muddy water carrying away tons of our limited soil to the ocean.

"Perhaps, no country and no people have squandered more of their most precious natural resource--our soil, from which comes food and life," says Mr. Marquez. "In the short span of 300 years since the Pilgrims landed, the layer of topsoil in which we grow our food has been reduced from 9 to 6 inches.

"And the story of the rain at the window and the wind in the eaves may be just as hopeful or just as tragic for the people who live in apartments and flats as to the folks who live on the farm," Marquez explains. "Their living comes from the land just as does the living of the farmer and his family. All depend on the soil for food.

"Through an effective soil and water conservation program the people in town as well as the folks on the farm can read in the wind and the rain the story of abundant harvests and plenty of food or just the reverse. It depends on the farmer. Proper conservation of the land means abundance, neglect means trouble.

"In the Agricultural Conservation Program we have a nation wide grass roots conservation effort that is proving effective. Administered by farmer-elected committeemen, it is based on practical farm operations. Progress is being made, but to do the job effectively will require the understanding cooperation of everyone. There is much still to be done."

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WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

CONSERVATION COSTS MONEY - "No matter how you figure," says _____, chairman of the _____ county agricultural conservation committee, "conservation costs something -- usually money. And if we let things go, we'll pay for our conservation many times over -- and we won't get it. The cost will be greatest if the job is neglected for then it will be paid in high priced food of poorer quality and reduced quantity."

"What many of us forget about conservation," says the chairman, "is that it's a national responsibility and that the Nation in one way or another is going to pay for it.

"If we let erosion take our land, we'll soon be paying by having less food and a lower standard of living. And the farmer isn't the only one who will suffer. In fact, the farmer may still be able to produce enough for his own use.

"The longer the Nation waits the more there will be to do and at a considerably higher price. And once the top-soil of a farm gets down into the Gulf of Mexico we won't get it back."

When it comes to ways of getting the job done, the chairman points out, it costs money and time and energy whether it is left solely to the individual farmer, or done through a publicly supported conservation program. Many of the most needed projects require the services of people with special engineering skill. Educational helps, and the use of costly machinery and equipment also are among the essentials.

"The Agricultural Conservation program," the chairman explains, "is merely a means whereby the farmer gets some financial and material help for the most needed conservation jobs. Many of the jobs would not be done without

that help. The program is the means for speeding up the needed action and for concentrating on practices which must have first attention. Operated through farmer-elected committees it is a thoroughly democratic way of getting a needed job done."

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MORE FOOD FROM THE SAME AMOUNT OF LAND - "Land is limited but population is increasing, and the only way the individual can continue eating as much as now is to conserve and improve the land to produce more food from each acre."

In this simple way C. V. Hemphill, chairman of the New Mexico PMA Committee, sums up the serious soil and water conservation problem facing America today.

Our hope for the future, the chairman explains, comes from the examples of farmers and ranchers who are making their acres produce more now and keeping up their land so that it will keep on producing.

The chairman cites D. B. Brooks, farmer of Shiro community, Walker County, Texas, as a good example of how farmers are taking care of the present and not forgetting the future. Through assistance under the Agricultural Conservation Program, Mr. Brooks has been able to produce two steers where one "grew" before.

This Texas farmer operates a 300-acre farm; 100 acres of open pasture, 125 acres of timber, and 75 acres cultivated. The pasture was worn out. Lime, phosphate, the seeding of adapted clovers and grasses, mowing of weeds and careful stocking brought it back. A better calf crop and heavier calves, ready for market 30 to 60 days earlier than before was the result.

"The Agricultural Conservation Program helped him get started and helped him get the job done," the chairman states. "A doubling of current food supplies from the same acreage and the assurance of continued abundant production, is the Nation's dividend for helping farmer Brooks with his conservation job."

SHELLED CORN DRYING TEST STARTED - A cooperative corn drying experiment under the Federal Marketing Research Act is underway in Indiana which may have far reaching effects for both corn growers and commercial users.

Shelled corn with 25 percent or more of moisture, supplied by the American Corn Products Refining Co., will be placed in two steel bins of 2,730 bushels capacity (18 ft. wide and 13 ft. high). Each bin contains a false bottom and warm air of around 130 degrees temperature will be blown into each bin between the false bottom and the floor. The warm air escaping upward through the corn will carry the moisture out through the top. A portable type farm drier will be used.

The corn from one of the bins will be shipped for processing immediately after drying while the other will be held over to determine the effects at germination time and to observe the condition of the corn throughout the summer.

The purpose is to develop a practical, low-cost method of low-temperature drying which will eliminate the losses and difficulties of handling, shipping and storing high-moisture shelled corn. It is hoped the method also will be applicable to wheat, oats, soy beans and other crops.

The project is under the general direction of Ed Ellison of the Grain Branch, Production and Marketing Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Dr. Henry Barre of the Indiana Agricultural Experiment Station is in charge of the test, with the Indiana State Production and Marketing Administration Committee cooperating.

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ARGENTINE CORN PROSPECTS FAVORABLE - Argentina's corn harvest, beginning in March, is expected to be larger than last year's 229 million bushels, and may reach as high as 275 million. If the crop is that large, the exportable surplus during the year beginning April 1 may be at least 150 million bushels.

Exports during the current season have amounted to about 80 million bushels.

No official estimate of the acreage planted for this year's crop is available but the area is believed to be about the same as the 8.9 million acres reported last year.

In area, Argentina is about equal to the 11 Mountain and Pacific States of the United States. More than 86 million acres in the U. S. were planted to corn during 1947.

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WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

1948 POTATO PRICE PROGRAM ANNOUNCED - In New Mexico, prices for early and intermediate potatoes of the 1948 crop will be supported at a basic price of $2.35 per 100 pounds, U.S. No. 1 grade, from the beginning of the season through August, according to C. V. Hemphill, chairman of the New Mexico Production and Marketing Administration Committee.

To be eligible for 1948 price supports, Mr. Hemphill explained, growers must (1) comply with their individual farm potato acreage goals, (2) sell specified lower grades of potatoes either to the Department of Agriculture or contracting dealers who will limit their disposal to outlets approved by the Department, and (3) pay a service fee in connection with establishing eligibility. Growers may also be required to enter into written agreements with the Department, covering these requirements and other matters such as limiting the amount of potatoes which may be offered within certain time periods.

Purchases, diversion, and export programs will be used as necessary to support the prices of the 1948 potato crop, the Department has announced. After the winter storage period begins, however — about September 15 — plans are to support potato prices only through loans.

Loans will be available at and after late crop harvest time, with a deadline for applications early enough to permit completion of loan documents before December 31, the end of the support period under the Steagall Amendment. Definite price supports for the late potato crop will be announced about July 1.

HOW MANY FARMS IN THE OCEAN? - Many years ago a wise Midwest farmer recognized what was happening to good farming land in America when he said, "The best part of my farm is down below New Orleans."

And this week C. V. Hemphill, Chairman of the New Mexico PMA Committee, wonders if anyone has thought to count the number of farms which go under the

bridge during a single flood season. He bases his figures on the fact that the deep accumulations of silt in the deltas of great rivers of this country is primarily the top soil of farms carried by unchecked water.

Tests show, says the chairman, that around 400 million tons of topsoil roll down the Mississippi River each year. An inch of topsoil from an acre of land weighs between 140 and 150 tons. At 150 tons of topsoil per acre, this loss would mean the equivalent of an inch of topsoil from 2-2/3 million acres.

The Columbia, Colorado, Rio Grande, and many other rivers are rolling soil out to sea too, the Chairman points out, but the Mississippi alone carries the equivalent of an inch of topsoil from the surface of nearly 17,000 farms of 160 acres each.

And even more serious, says the Chairman, the topsoil comes from the best land on the farm--the land that is in row crops or which is being worked mostto produce the nation's crops.

Says the Chairman, "Like the sand in the hour-glass, the soil at the top is going down. But unlike the hour-glass the process cannot be reversed. The top-soil does not run back.

"From that limited amount of topsoil, which is getting less each year, must come the 435 million meals a day for the 145 million people in this country. In addition, tons and tons of food are needed to keep Europe from going under.

"And every farm that goes under the bridge means just that much less land from which to grow the food we need--that much more of a burden on the land that is left."

Mr. Hemphill said that the primary objective of the Agricultural Conservation Program is to reduce this loss. "Through this program," he points out, "the Nation cooperates with its farmers in carrying out conservation practices which keep the soil and water on the farm."

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USE ACP IN PRODUCING GOALS, SAYS CHAIRMAN - "Produce your goals, but don't overlook ACP practices as a way to offset the drains on your land," is the advice of _____, Chairman of the _____County Agricultural Conservation Committee. Farmers in the county have a choice of about _____ different practices in order to qualify for assistance under this year's program.

Farmers know that their land is being pushed too hard and want to start returning to better rotations and more soil-conservation practices, _____explained. At the same time, the continuing large demands for food, both in this country and abroad, make it necessary to keep farm output of most crops at wartime highs. So farmers generally go along with the goals, and take whatever steps they can to rebuild their soil and keep it from washing away.

National totals on 1948 goal acreages are expected to be somewhere around 354 million acres. The exact figure is not known just now because goals for peanuts, some types of tobacco, sweetpotatoes, and truck crops for processing are still under consideration by States. Assuming 1948 goals for these few crops at Department-recommended levels, however, the 1948 goal of around 354 million acres would exceed 1947 actual acreages by 75 million acres.

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BEES AID SOIL CONSERVATION - What have bees got to do with conservation of the soils of this country?

More than most people realize, says _____Chairman of the _____ Agricultural Conservation Program Committee.

It is the legumes, such as red clover, alfalfa, lespedeza, vetches and others, the Chairman explains, that add great quantities of organic matter and nitrogen to the soils each year. The nitrogen increases crops, particularly the grasses in pastures and meadows. Grasses improve the tilth of soil. Soils in good tilth resist erosion. So it is the legumes that start the chain of beneficial actions that ultimately bring the soil to the condition that it resists erosion.

And, says the chairman, bees are essential to legumes. They make something like 160,000 visits to the blossoms of the legumes to gather the nectar that will make a pound of honey. And while they're making those nectar gathering visits, they help pollination, which leads to the production of legume seeds.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture estimates there will be an increase of 4 percent in the shipments of package bees over the 1,375,000 pounds shipped last year. Reports from Texas indicate that the demand for queens is considerably heavier than last year, when 1,007,200 queens were shipped.

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GRAIN SUPPLIES IN EXPORTING AREAS SMALLER - Grain supplies in the four principal exporting countries — the United States, Canada, Australia, and Argentina — were estimated at 123 million short tons on January 1, 1948. This is the smallest total in recent years, the Department of Agriculture points out.

Cause of the small supply is mainly due to the short 1947 U.S. corn crop — about 850 million bushels below 1946 production, as well as to the reduction in oats in both the U. S. and Canada.

Good news for the hungry world, however, is that breadgrain supplies in the four countries are somewhat larger than at the beginning of the past 2 years, though still not up to the high level of 1944 and 1945.

Total grain stocks in the U. S. on January 1, were 85 million short tons, about 15 percent below the stocks a year earlier.

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PLENTY OF COMMON ALFALFA SEED AVAILABLE IN NEW MEXICO - Several months ago the Department of Agriculture announced a program whereby the price of common alfalfa seed would be supported to eligible producers. The support price is 17 cents per pound for seed testing at least 90 percent germination with a minimum of 97 percent pure seed.

The price was supported through the Purchase Agreement Program with Commodity Credit Corporation, and County Committeemen approved the producers' Agreements for Commodity Credit Corporation. Twenty-five producers in Dona Ana County and 32 in Eddy County signed the Agreement covering in excess of 600,000 pounds of seed. The producers retain title to this seed until May 31, 1948, and may sell it any time prior to that date. This is by no means all the available alfalfa seed in these counties since many growers did not sign the Agreement.

Due to the improved outlook for irrigation water, many farmers may want to plant alfalfa this Spring for the soil-conserving value and for the hay crop. Anyone experiencing difficulty in securing seed should write the Chairman of the Dona Ana or Eddy County Committees for the names of dealers or producers having seed for sale.

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WHEAT AGREEMENT OFFERS 5-YEAR MARKET - "To assure supplies of wheat to importing countries and to assure markets to exporting countries at equitable and stable prices," are the objectives of the International Wheat Agreement recently concluded in Washington. The first of its kind in history, the Agreement is the result of many years of effort to stabilize the world wheat market through international cooperation.

(More)

Subject to approval of the participating governments, the Agreement covers these points:

1. Five year's duration is provided — from August 1, 1948 through July 31, 1953.

2. Maximum and minimum prices are fixed for each of the 5 years, the maximum being $2 per bushel for the life of the agreement, and the minimum beginning with $1.50 per bushel for 1948-49 and decreasing by 10 cents per bushel each year to $1.10 for 1952-53.

3. Canada, Australia, and the United States guarantee to sell 500 million bushels of wheat (230, 85 and 185 respectively) annually to importing "Agreement" countries at prices no higher than the maximum.

4. Importing countries, 33 in all, guarantee to buy stated quantities annually totaling 500 million bushels, from the three exporting countries at prices no lower than the minimum.

5. Countries are free to trade in wheat at prices above the ceiling or below the floor provided obligations under the Agreement are carried out.

6. Lower maximum prices and higher minimums for the third, fourth, and fifth years may be determined by the newly formed International Wheat Council, made up of nations which ratify the Agreement, provided the prices are approved by a two-thirds majority of the votes held by the exporting and importing countries voting separately.

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ACP SOIL SAVING PARTNERSHIP - Both the farmers who carry out the conservation practices and the consumer who helps "foot the bill" can be proud of what they've done under the Agricultural Conservation Program, says _____, chairman of the _____ County Agricultural Conservation Committee.

(More)

This year about $150 million has been appropriated for conservation under ACP. Divided among the 145 million people in the country, that means a little over a dollar per person. But to the farmer it means that 10 or 20 or maybe 200 or 300 persons are cooperating with him in getting the conservation job done on his farm.

In actual practice, under this partnership program for soil and water conservation, the chairman explains, the farmer more than matches every dollar put up by consumers. In addition he usually does all the work. Often, encouraged by the limited help in getting started, he expands his conservation efforts far beyond the basic practices of the program.

Dividends resulting from this public-farmer partnership are many and varied, says the chairman. The farmer has a better farm. Erosion and depletion are slowed down. The farm will last longer. Continued operation is assured and production is increased.

The public benefits from continued abundant production of food and other essential agricultural commodities. The land is being held on the farm and improved. Essentially, says the chairman, the program is an insurance policy which continues to pay dividends indefinitely into the future. Both farmer and consumer help pay the dividends and both are the continuing beneficiaries. This partnership is about the most effective way found of getting the job done.

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TECHNOLOGY AND THE FARMER - Enough agricultural products to support himself and more than 13 others was the record chalked up by each farmer and farm worker in wartime 1945. In 1920, one farmer supported only 10 (counting himself), and in 1820 only a little more than 4.

The figures are cited by _____, chairman of the _____ County Agricultural Conservation Committee, to indicate what technology —

(More)

applied science — is doing for agriculture. He points out that in 1945 every man-hour of work meant 44 percent more gross production than in 1917-21. Half of these savings in hours per unit of product resulted from mechanization. Other developments, mainly increases in yields of crops and livestock, were responsible for the other half.

Farm horses and mules have been rapidly replaced by tractors, trucks, and automobiles during the last third of a century. A modern tractor and its equipment now save 850 hours of man labor compared with the time required to do the job with the animal power and equipment used a generation ago. What's more, mechanization has made possible more timely operations, and this has helped increase farm production especially when adverse weather delayed the preparation of land and planting.

The increase in food supplies for feeding an increasing population from 1920 to 1942 came about in this way: 30 percent came from acreages released by the decline in horses and mules; 70 percent from increased crop and livestock yields and from decreased exports.

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TASTE TELLS - Taste evidently tells cows as well as human beings what to eat.

Chairman _____ of the _____ County Agricultural Conservation Committee cites the case of a Jackson County, Michigan farmer who seeded 24 acres of marsh land to Reed's Canary grass. He got a fine stand. Growth was excellent. But the cattle wouldn't eat it. Instead they grazed an adjoining field of upland bluegrass down to the ground. If forced to eat the Reed's Canary, they didn't do well...their calves were weak.

The next year the farmer put 250 pounds of 0-20-20 on each acre of the Reed's Canary grass. Thereafter, the farmer reports, the cows grazed the Reed's Canary in preference to the upland bluegrass and did well on it.

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